

Parish Profiles for the Benefice of Foxtan, Gumley and Laughton

Foreward	Page 2
The Benefice Needs You!	Page 3
St Andrews Foxtan	Page 4
St Helens Gumley	Page 13
St Lukes Laughton	Page 17



Foreward

When most people think of church they probably think of buildings and traditions. Others may immediately have in mind hypocrisy and division; some perhaps a sense of rejection and being let down.

There is only one church and every Christian belongs to it, whatever country they live in or language they speak. The church is the Body of Christ - made up of all those who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Christians working together

In each part of the benefice of Foxton Gumley and Laughton, you will find Christians seeking to work together to serve the community and to share the love of God. We have a number of activities that have sprung out of a shared sense of being God's people here, including:

- Regular and well supported family services
- A community choir
- Crossroads Youth Club
- Annual children's Holiday Club
- Courses including Alpha and Wholeness and healing
- Active commitment to the international Compassion Scheme
- Village "open days"
- Community fund raising events, including barn dances

Working together as much as we can, the church within the Benefice seeks to welcome and serve its many visitors.

"Good News and great joy for all"

The angels announced the arrival of Jesus with these words. Lives continue to be changed as men, women and children encounter the love of God. The Apostle Paul wrote that the message of the cross is foolishness or a stumbling block to those who don't understand - but it is the power and wisdom of God for those who are being saved.

We continue to declare the Good News of Jesus Christ across the Benefice today. The church may seem diverse in the extreme, but there is beauty and strength in that when we share one common purpose - to worship, serve and share the Good News of our Lord.

The Benefice Needs You!

We would like to see strong and inspiring spiritual leadership that can capitalise on the work that has been done and encourage those wishing to take the church's mission forward, to welcome newcomers to the church and engage those who visit occasionally to get involved more fully. We recognise there are challenging years ahead both spiritually and economically across not only this country, but globally. This is an opportunity for leadership that will uplift and motivate us to take a role that may contribute positively in these difficult times.

The Foxton, Gumley and Laughton Benefice would benefit from a person who brings enthusiasm and dedication to help our church grow. We would like our new Priest to be approachable, with a real presence in our rural village communities. We hope he or she will be supported by their husband or wife who will also be involved in our communities. A sense of humour is always appreciated, and we remain open to new ways of enhancing the life of the Church but most of all we are looking for a pastor to the whole community, not just the congregation.

Our parishioners are seeking the following attributes in our new vicar. We're looking for someone who:

- can connect with families and young people and continue the work of Church@5, Family Service, Crossroads and Cell Group and continue with links to the local primary school and the village communities;
- can interpret the Bible in and for today's world;
- believes in the importance of prayer in the life of the Church and in helping people to pray;
- can encourage the congregation to use its skills;
- can develop the spiritual life of the church;
- presents the Gospel creatively, and relevantly.
- is open, musically, to embrace modern songs in worship;
- has time to spend with people;
- is willing to take a welcoming attitude to those wanting to re-marry in church after divorce;
- accepts the ordained ministry of women & is willing to work alongside them in equal partnership;

Parish Profile

St Andrews Church Foxton Leicestershire

Church Wardens: Keith Gubbins
Brian Weller

Secretary: Julia Bedford

Treasurer: Michael Smith



We are prayerfully seeking a bible-teaching and mission-focussed man or woman who is committed to pastoral care and can lead our churches into the next period of growth and ministry.

'The Church Family':

- St Andrews has always been a welcoming and inclusive church. It is a traditional village 'low' church where those who have a Baptist, Congregational, and even a more Catholic background feel welcome.
- The congregation are very children friendly and welcome them in all the services;
- The PCC has 9 members, six men and three women. It is aged between 50 and 75 but it actively looking for new and younger members.
- The fellowship is great, staying long after services are finished. Both current members and visitors alike are warmly welcomed and we're keen to build community and fellowship for all. We're pleased that people stay after services for coffee and conversation.
- It is a vibrant church with keen and hardworking members in it, who are a joy to work with. It is a church which is fun to be in, enjoys a great sense of humour, and is caring and compassionate.
- The way that the pastoral work of the church is undertaken by a decent number of dedicated lay people is commendable and noteworthy.

- The church continues to grow and there have been newly confirmed adults approximately every two years. But new members have also arrived or been introduced when, for example, their children have been baptised or they have been married here and have then continued to attend.
- In the past we have held Alpha Courses and sent young people on C.P.A.S. Ventures - the Norfolk Broads cruise is one of them.
- Whilst using Mission Praise, the musical style of the Church has also included more modern material, especially the songs of Stuart Townend and Matt Redman.

Mission activities and initiatives:

Our Mission Statement is 'Meeting God, Growing Together, Reaching Out'.

We feel strongly that we should reach out more effectively to the wider community that attends the 'big' services like the Carol Service and Christingle, particularly families with young children' and identify ways of encouraging them to become more involved over time. This wider group would not attend the marquee services if it didn't feel some affinity with the Church, its values and core activity. We think one of the challenges here is to find ways, creatively, of appealing to this franchise in a way that encourages it to get more involved in the church community and extend the range of activities that take place in the building itself and the 'family' as a whole. Such growth might need to be gradual, subtle and not necessarily need to be based on hard, evangelical, biblical teaching.

- We have sought recently to build up links between the two communities of Foxton and Gartree and two years ago set up the Foxton and Gartree Community Choir.



The Community Choir continues to be an innovative mission idea. It has a pool of about 25 members of all ages and has recently benefited from a grant of £800 from the Parish Mission Fund to develop its activities. The Choir has brought new people to church services and given a new focus for some new singers, particularly from the Estate next to Gartree Prison. Members of the Choir have also given a presentation about its activity to a special Mission Partnership Service in nearby Oadby. We think this is a valuable and unique development - and a good example of the kind of 'softer' growth we talk about above.

- Crossroads Youth Club, fortnightly (age range 11 - 15) Average attendance 25 -30. This is a village youth group where almost all the youth of the village attend at some stage of their teenage lives, quite rare in a village this size.
- Youth Cell Group, approx fortnightly (age range 13 - 18+) Average attendance 5. Youth Cell was set up as an offshoot of Crossroads for young people who wanted to explore, develop and grow deeper in their faith.
- Annual children's Holiday Club (1 week in August for 50 children) in Robert Monk Hall, Foxton. This is an action-packed, over-subscribed, fun-filled week in which over 50 children hear the gospel message. It usually uses Scripture Union material. The Holiday Club has benefited from the parishes of Gumley and Foxton working closely together and providing leadership from both parishes- as well as giving leadership opportunities to members of the Youth Cell. At present, this week runs very successfully but we do want to see more continuity and follow-up with the children and their families who attend this week and encourage them to come to Church.
- Coffee Morning in the church (after 10.00am Holy Communion). This is well-attended and fellowship greatly enjoyed.
- Lent Group: this runs once a year (although we will struggle to hold it in 2012 without a priest-in-charge) and is normally attended by half-a-dozen people. There has been a Bible Study/House group but this has not been particularly well-attended. There is room for future development of this kind of initiative but creative thought needs to be given as to how it could be made to have wider appeal.
- We also run one-off courses, such as 'Alpha' and the recent 'Wholeness & Healing' course led by the Diocesan Advisor. The course had about 15 regular attendees of whom 6 were from Foxton. As a result we feel better equipped to include prayer ministry in our services and have plans for lay members of the congregation to undertake this in services in the near future.
- Foxton Primary School has consistently, over several years, been rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. There is no formal church link but weekly assemblies (music, stories, prayer) have been held by the previous Vicar. The school attends services at Harvest, Christmas and Easter, in church, with parents and teachers. Pupils from the school also attend a packed Christingle service on Christmas Eve as well Holiday Club. The school also houses a privately run nursery school.

- A bi-monthly parish newsletter is produced and distributed in Foxton and on the Gartree Estate.

Mission statement/plan for the future:

Our Plan For the Future is that 'Meeting God, Growing Together, Reaching Out' continue to be implemented and developed.

- Mission to be taken seriously. It is a main agenda item for the PCC and is followed up. The PCC is looking actively to develop and give it wider appeal, to grow and sustain new opportunities as we have suggested above.
- There are the opportunities to sustain and grow lay Christian ministries in what are now not only viable, but potentially thriving parishes.
- There is the opportunity to build on the commitment of the relatively small number of regular active worshippers in the 30 - 50 age groups. This may be small, but at least there are some there!
- If the benefice was enlarged so that neighbouring Lubenham were to re-join, existing links (occasional worshippers/Lent Group attendees) would be strengthened and thus, potentially, create a model of a more thriving and growing rural benefice

Facilities supporting the church mission

- A recently added servery and a toilet, and these both increase the usability of the available space and provide a development opportunity for a wider range of future activities, such as Church breakfasts, coffee mornings, but also greater use of the building itself;
- A 16:9 flatscreen television and laptop are available to support some services, particularly Church@5;
- The church is in a good state of repair;
- There is working public address, amplification and speaker system to provide strong sound throughout the whole Church, including radio mics.
- In recent years the building has been sensitively modernised (including the above servery and toilet). Pews have also been removed from north & south aisles to give greater flexibility for the overall space (the Community Choir, for example, rehearses there);
- There is a very good heating system;
- We are proud of the fact that we keep our church open 24/7;
- The Church has access to the Village Hall, for example, for Crossroads and Holiday Club. The vicar has also been an ex-officio trustee of Robert Monk's Foxton Charity and attended around 6 meetings a year on behalf of the church. Also he was an ex-officio trustee of the Foxton Parochial Charities which meets once a year to hand out money at Christmas.

Finance

- The parish pays a full share and always has done so;
- Foxton shows a healthy financial balance;
- members of the church are committed to giving regularly and sometimes generously which enables the PCC to look for best uses and stewardship of that money for mission purposes. However, some extra fund-raising is usually necessary (over and above pure giving) in order to pay the Parish Share and a major source is now an annual Gift Day which raises about 10% of the required figure. Other fund-raising often takes the form of fayres, clutter sales, picnics, auctions of promises, even raffles.

Leadership

We are fortunate to have regular ministerial support from Canon Rev. Brian Davis, a retired priest who lives in Market Harborough and who also currently conducts the Community Choir.

Monthly pattern of Services

Frequency	Time	Type	Average attendance 2010	Adults/children
1 st Sundays	8.00am	Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)	8	8/0
1 st Sundays	10.30am	Family Service	31	27/4
2 nd Sundays	6.00pm	Holy Communion or Evening Prayer	18	18/0
3 rd Sundays	10.30am	Family Communion	24	23/1
4 th Sundays	5.00pm	Church@5	28	22/6
Tuesdays	10.00am	Holy Communion	10	10/0
5 th Sundays		United Service with Gumley and Laughton		
Average Sunday Attendance			25	

There also special services such as the one at the end of Holiday Club, Christingle, the Carol Service, Midnight Communion on Christmas Eve and Easter Sunday that are attended by the wider group of people who come to the church only occasionally and to whom we have referred above. There must have been 120 or so at the 2011 Carol Service in a village of around 400. There is definite potential to reach out to this section of the community as a development initiative in the future.

Links with the other parishes

Links with the other two parishes in the Benefice do exist but are not, perhaps, as strong as they might be. Each of the villages has its own identity and although relations between them are warm and friendly, there is a definite opportunity to build upon these through our joint services which currently take place when there is fifth Sunday in the month.

There are not genuinely strong links with other parishes within the Mission Partnership either (beyond the priest-in-charge) and there is a further development opportunity here.

St Andrews Church



The oldest parts of the church date from about 1200AD, as a centre for the religious life of a Saxon community. The church as we see it now dates from around 1450AD. Older than the oldest parts of the church is the shaft of a Saxon Cross, dating from around 1000 AD. It stands within the church near to the now blocked up South doorway.

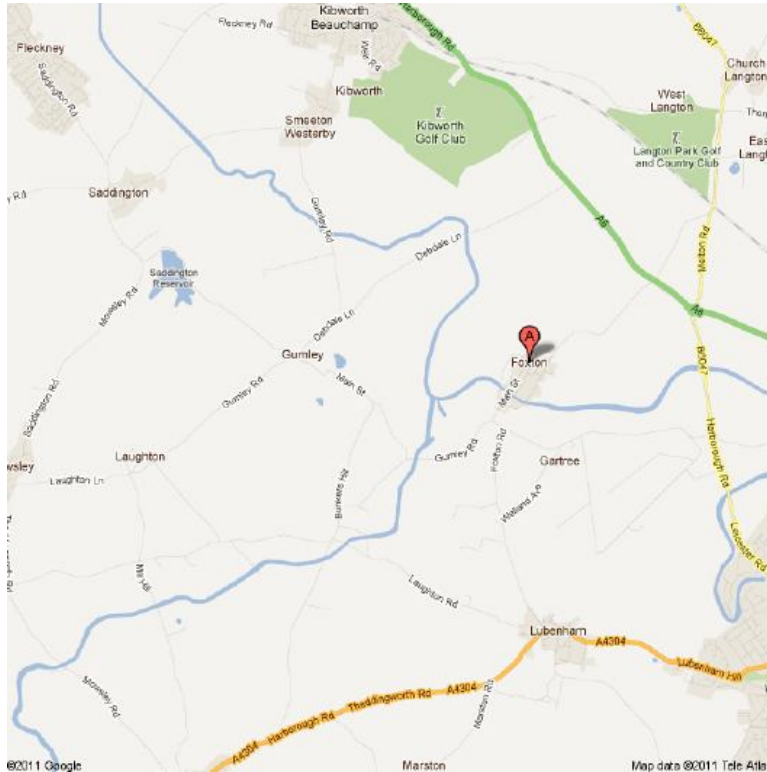


Most of the interior fittings date from a major restoration which took place around 1890. Foxton is a typical example of an ironstone medieval church with a Victorian interior layout. Until the year 2000 the only stained glass window was in the East Window. To commemorate the millennium, a new stained glass window was installed and can be seen at the East end of the South aisle. The Church boasts a bell tower containing six bells, recast in 1912.

The Vicarage

The vicarage serving the Benefice is located in Foxton. It's a large, four bedroomed house with a study and garage, with plenty of room to park. It also boasts a good sized secure garden - ideal for young children and families to play safely.

The village of Foxton



Foxton is a village of approximately 400 residents. It has a very active and supportive community. The age ranges of its residents vary from retired folk to families with young children. Some residents work locally in the local town of Market Harborough, and others travel further afield to our closest city, Leicester, and others commute to London. There are several small enterprises set within the village, although agriculture is one of

the main industries.

Foxton is close (approx ½ mile) to the estate community of Gartree, once providing accommodation to the staff and officers working at Gartree Prison, but now providing relatively inexpensive private housing.

The village is divided by the Grand Union Canal, which runs from Market Harborough to Leicester. Many visitors to Foxton arrive and depart by narrow boat when cruising along the canal. The hump back bridge over the canal at the top of Main St helps to slow traffic down.

Foxton is located about 3 miles to the Northwest of Market Harborough, with Gumley 1 ½ miles to the West and Laughton a further 3 miles West, and is served hourly by a regular bus service to Market Harborough. There is also a small community of residential boat-owners at the foot of Foxton canal locks.

Village life



- The Robert Monk Village Hall, recently completely refurbished
 - Caters for a variety of social gatherings (approx 90 max)
 - The church has enjoyed rent free (not documented) use for many events, including Crossroads & Holiday Club
 - Other societies using the hall include, W.I., Foxton Garden Society, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, Short Mat

Bowls, Dog training

- The hall has a full sized snooker table and an active snooker club
- Has a separate committee meeting room
- Full catering facilities
- The school: Foxton County Primary School is Ofsted rated as Outstanding and is attended by the majority of children aged 4-11 in the village and on the Gartree Estate. It is an asset to the area and the relationship with the Church one to nurture.
- Foxton Tennis Club
- Foxton Society organises social events throughout the year. It also publishes a quarterly village magazine which gives news and details of interest to the whole community.



- Foxton Locks and country park- a significant tourist attraction, including an historic "inclined plane" boat lift (under refurbishment) and the famous Foxton flight of locks. Located about ½ mile from Foxton. There is also a boat inspection service and chandlery available here.

- Two public houses within Foxton village
 - The Shoulder of Mutton, which specialises in Chinese cuisine
 - The Black Horse, which is a more traditional pub, having classic car meetings, live jazz and other music evenings.
 - Both public houses host special events to help support St Andrew's Church and the local community.
- The village store, located in the old skittle alley at the Black Horse. Caters for most essential supplies, including newspapers. Supports the church by supplying a range of "goodies" for various events.
- At the foot of the Locks, there is a small general grocery shop and two more public houses, one a traditional canal-side pub, the other more restaurant orientated.

- There is a definite sense of community, helped by the activities of organisations like the Robert Monk Charity and The Foxton Society and apparent at family fun days, Nov 5th fireworks, village fetes and there is central recreation ground and children's playground.

Conclusion:

We feel that far from being a quiet village with a dwindling interest in and attendance at Church, this is a strong community where there's been local growth at a time of national decline. This is due not least to the efforts of the previous incumbent at St. Andrews - but also to the place and people itself. It is close enough to Market Harborough to be rooted in the outside world but retains many of the traditional characteristics of a rural locality. It has a broad social mix, with professionals who commute to London as well as local workers and families, the retired and the neighbouring Gartree Estate with its links to the prison.

The Church here could be said genuinely still to be at the heart of the community for many who live here and can continue to be, if strongly-led and if lay participation can be encouraged and mentored.

There is a genuine opportunity here to build on the work of the past fifteen years and on the commitment of core of active Christians - but also on the potential of parts of the wider population which is in sympathy with the Church's aims and values but whose involvement is not as great as it could be.

Parish Profile



**St Helens Church
Main Street
Gumley
Leicestershire
LE16 7RU**

Church Wardens: John March, Cradock House, Gumley
(0116 279 3931) john.march@agrovista.co.uk
David Caines, Westfield, Gumley
(0116 279 2353) D1caines@aol.com

Secretary: Penny March, Cradock House, Gumley
(0116 279 3931) penny_march@wragge.com

Treasurer: Rachel Earland, Beauchamp Farm, Debdale
(0116 279 2428) rachel.earland@hotmail.com

St Helens Church, Gumley



Gumley is a small village (approx 100 residents) on the South East side of Leicestershire and was once an Estate village with the Pub & a number of houses still in Estate ownership. It is the un-official home of the Fernie Hunt with the Opening Meet taking place every year on the last Saturday in October.

Its residents are a varied demographic with some working locally and others commuting to London and other major cities. There are 3 working farming families in the village and an active Pub and a Village Hall which hosts Village functions on a regular basis. There is an active retired population who are supported by both family and village people which enables them to remain in their homes. The children living in the Village attend both Church Langton and Foxton Village schools and the older children are bussed to Kibworth and Market Harborough.

There are a number of organisations within the Village, including a strong WI group (about 18 members) a weekly Zumba (keep fit) class (12 members), a monthly Investment Club (10 members) and a quarterly "newspaper", The Gumley Grapevine (copy attached).

Our children attend Foxton Scouts and Beaver Groups and the older ones attend the Cell Group and Church @ 5.

We also open our doors and welcome Villagers for Baptism, Weddings & Funerals and these become Village social events.



For a small village our average attendance is still 10% of the total village population which is above the national average, and for those who are not regular Church attendees, they still play an active part in Church life. Our recent fund raising activities to collect £22,000 for urgent Roof Repairs, is testament to this as the main fund raiser is an agnostic who just loves St Helens for the historical building that it is!!

St Helens is a very welcoming, 13th Century Church sitting at the top of the village and individual members are very good at making newcomers of all ages feel welcome, both before and after services and all members of the church are encouraged to take an active part in church life. The church remains open at weekends and appreciative comments are regularly written in the Visitors Book. For a small Church, St Helens prides itself in still holding a service every Sunday.

The dedicated core of PCC members (approx 10) is very hard-working indeed and their enthusiasm encourages other village residents to contribute where they can to the wider church life by fund raising, attending "special" services and also in maintaining the building and the grounds. As an example, regular "weeding" mornings in the winter seem very popular with all members of the family joining in with home made cakes and coffee to keep the party fed and watered!

The regular services remain varied in content attempting to provide in its monthly pattern, service styles and content to suit all age-groups. The congregation is very loyal, attending all types of services (not just their own preferred ones) to build up and maintain the local "Body of Christ".

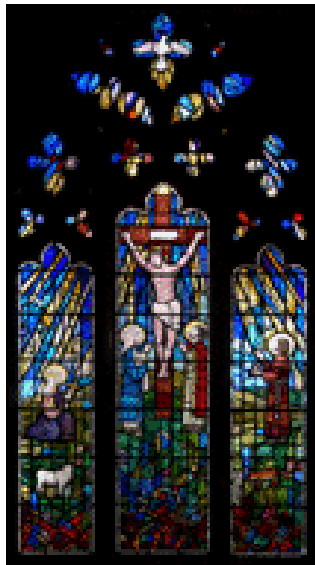
The service pattern is 9am Said Holy Communion on the 1st and 3rd Sundays, 4.45pm Evening Prayer with hymns on the 2nd Sunday and 4.45pm Family Service with Hymns and Songs on the 4th Sunday. Where there are 5 Sundays in a month, the 3 Parishes in the Benefice hold a joint service on a rotational basis.

Over recent years this dedicated group of people have arranged additional services to encourage other villagers to participate. This includes an Act of Remembrance at the Village War Memorial and a Rogation Walk/Service followed by tea at the Village Hall.

The Monthly Family Services remain our best supported service (average 20 attendees) with increasing family involvements which is to be encouraged. During the school summer holidays Gumley children have also supported the Benefice Holiday Club with some 60 - 70 children attending each morning session. St Helens also supports a child in Bolivia, South America (Helen Mico) through the Compassion Scheme as part of active commitment in reaching out to those who share the same faith but do not have the same opportunities. This sponsorship has been running for about 8 years with not only financial contributions but active letter writing too.



With such small regular congregations (average of 10) the raising of funds for both the building and the Parish Share (which we pay in full!) is a struggle but members are enthusiastic and plough all their hard work into "Gumley Open Gardens" on the first Sunday in July. This event has made a profit of over £5,000 each year and is the main fund raising activity. This Village open day engages the whole village in the running of the Village Hall for refreshments, various stalls up and down the village, an Art Exhibition in the Church and approximately 10 dedicated families who open their gardens to the public. This sort of total commitment of the village people of Gumley is testament to the tight knit community that makes Gumley the village it is.



Parish Profile

St Luke's Church
Laughton
Leicestershire
LE17 6QE

Church Wardens: **Robert Whitehead**
 Kate Gilbertson-Hart

Secretary: **Charles Bennion**

Treasurer: **Chris Hilton**



St Luke's Church serves the village community of Laughton which is part of the larger benefice of Foxton and Gumley with a combined population of approximately 600. Laughton is a small village with an electoral roll of approximately 65, located in a very pretty, rural part of South Leicestershire, only 5 miles west of Market Harborough.

Parts of the church date back to late Norman times in the thirteenth century but the building has been much restored particularly in Victorian times.

Laughton has two Church Wardens each well below retirement age with young children. There are 18 on the Church Electoral Roll. We have two working farming families; most residents work locally in Market Harborough or Leicester or are retired.

Our average church attendance is 8, more than 10% of the population of the village, and children attend most morning services.



On the fifth Sunday of the month there is a joint service with Foxton and Gumley. Other joint services include All Saints Day, Remembrance Sunday and Ash Wednesday.

Laughton villagers are quick to support village fundraising and social initiatives and have regular traditional fund raisers such as the annual Pancake Party, and Harvest Festival (both for the benefit of the Church) and also Carol Singing, the Barn Dance and other fund raising activities within the village.

These activities are very successful not only in raising much needed funds but also in drawing the village together and presenting a warm welcome to those from surrounding villages. The whole village pulls together for many of these events, irrespective of whether they are regular church attendees. In the past the annual 'May Day Work Party' was very well supported by people of all ages and abilities, involving maintenance of key features like the church mud wall restoration, tidying the churchyard etc. There is also a tradition in Laughton of getting together to celebrate big national events such as the Queen's Jubilee.

Laughton is a very warm and caring community, whilst the village embraces its' many varied characters, each can be his or her own self, but help is always at hand when needed. The church forms the heart of the village and there is a recently refurbished small Village Hall, but no shop or pub.



Unlike many churches of a similar size and location, Laughton continues to hold weekly services. The church is lovingly and well cared for by a voluntary team of cleaners and flower arrangers who ensure that our church is welcoming to visitors at all times.

Laughton has a charitable trust of which the Priest in Charge is an ex officio trustee. This charity is active in responding to some of Laughton's needs within the confines of its original remit registered with the Charity Commission.

Of particular note regarding the financial health of the parish, Laughton's Parish Share is paid by mid year. The fabric of the church is in good order and the PCC has a dedicated core of 10 people and is well financed. The PCC donates to Christian charities, recently the Barnabas Fund and The Children's Society.

Laughton is fortunate enough to have two organists and a small but enthusiastic congregation. We are taking this opportunity to consider how we may foster greater links within the Benefice through joint services and other initiatives. We would welcome the possibility of including Lubenham in the benefice in the future.

Although Laughton has changed little over the last decade, under the leadership of our previous vicar we enjoyed a church that always extended a very warm welcome and was particularly accommodating to children and families. The benefit of this approach was especially noticeable in the larger parishes. We are keen that our new vicar build upon this open and flexible approach.

